

At the very least, some programs might be improved if the poor's participation was at the implementation level and not at the policy level.

Many of our members feel that it would be worthwhile to gather additional evidence and information regarding this very controversial position. We can see no harm in allowing several programs to be carried out with the poor's participation being limited to implementation. This will mean they are serving as caseworkers, liaison and general staff, personnel, and so forth. Under such arrangement the policy-making would be under the purview of the local elected official.

We feel that we should be innovative and experimental with all aspects of the OEO programs including this very critical issue. Demonstration programs could provide us with the opportunity of evaluating and comparing which type of involvement brings the maximum benefit to the poor.

Another type of demonstration we would suggest would be the opportunity of experimenting with what is halfway between that which is currently required and that which we have suggested.

In this case, the Office of Economic Opportunity could recognize the elected county board as the umbrella agency which is ultimately responsible for coordination and funding all CAP activities. All OEO grant funds would go to the county treasurer and be subject to periodic audits.

In order to qualify for any project OEO grants, the county board would be required to develop a comprehensive plan for community action against poverty. This action plan would be able, where appropriate, to integrate all of the county programs with those financed by OEO funds.

In addition, it would facilitate the assimilation of OEO programs into the regular county operation where the OEO programs were proven effective and worth while. The county would hire and appoint additional staff to that of its normal planning operation. Such additional staff would be specifically charged to plan antipoverty projects.

On the other hand, the county would be required to establish a citizen advisory council, the majority of which would be composed of representatives of the poor. This council would also be staffed by those persons hired by the county to plan poverty projects.

Ideas for poverty projects could originate with either the county board or the citizen advisory council, but final approval would require independent approval of both.

The advisory council should or could provide for neighborhood councils where antipoverty projects would be in actual operation. These neighborhood councils could also have the majority representation of the poor.

In addition, the chairman also—of the neighborhood council—should also be a member of the countywide advisory council which would, in effect, have the veto power over all the proposed projects as would the county board.

The war on poverty is going to be a very long and frustrating effort. We feel it will be unfortunate if we assume doctrinaire positions regarding issues which are still subject to such different opinions by persons who have a genuine and sincere desire and are working toward ending the misery, hunger, and ignorance which plague so many of our fellow citizens.